

Best Beginnings STARS to Quality



Montana Best Beginnings STARS to Quality OVERVIEW

National standards of quality child care	Expected Outcomes for Children	MONTANA STARS Addresses National Standards	Actions that support the standards
Education, qualifications and training of staff/caregivers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved social, emotional, physical, and cognitive development Improved achievement in early years, kindergarten and beyond 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participating in Montana Early Care & Education Professional Development System [the Registry] 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Comprehensive professional development including continuum of training Provides on-site mentoring and technical assistance Awards incentives and bonuses Verifies education & ongoing training through The Registry
Staff/caregivers-to-child ratio and group size	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduced aggressive behaviors Enhanced language and literacy Increased emotional security Improved school readiness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lower ratios and smaller group sizes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides low adult-to-child ratios Creates smaller group sizes of children Combines low ratios and reduced group sizes Promotes increased attentive supervision and responsiveness
Family & Community Partnerships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduced incidences of child abuse and neglect Reduced stress Improves social competence, cognitive development, literacy and communication skills Improved school readiness and successful transition to kindergarten Increased understanding of similarities and respect for differences among people Child care providers participate in the child's early intervention or special education team 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Seeks and maintains a collaborative relationship with families, community, and social support systems [Knowledge Base] 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Respects families as the first and most important teacher Builds on and supports family strengths Strengthens relationships between parents and staff/caregivers Demonstrates awareness of community resources and actively assists families in seeking them Respects variations across cultures in terms of family strengths, expectations, values, and child-rearing practices Exhibits an understanding of the impact of special needs on families and children
Leadership and Program Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased social competence Positive self-esteem is 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Measures the quality of leadership and program management using national assessment tools 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promotes program stability, reduced staff turnover and solid infrastructure Improves continuity of care leading to the

	supported through respectful interactions in a positive learning climate		<p>development of trusting relationships and attachments with staff/caregivers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Demonstrates a commitment to the early childhood profession by advocating for quality programs and services for children and families • Adheres to and articulates the National Association for the Education of Young Children professional Code of Ethics
Environments for Care & Learning <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Environments • Health, Wellness & Safety • Curriculum Development and Learning Activities • Relationships 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supports growing independence in hygiene, nutrition, and personal care • Improved social, emotional, physical, and cognitive skills • Improved emerging math, language and literacy skills at the time of entry in school • Increased positive interactions with peers, fewer challenging behaviors in early care and through the transition to school • Communicable disease rates decrease • Accident rates decrease 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Measures the quality of child care program environments using Montana and national assessment tools • Promotes individualization for each child based on his or her strengths, needs, and interests 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creates a quality improvement plan based on environmental rating scale results • Addresses health and wellness needs through the program and using Bringing Early Success Training to Providers (BEST) practice • Demonstrates positive staff/child interactions • Curriculum is designed based on child observations • Child observations inform the program goals and objectives

Pathway to Star One	Resources/Incentives to Star One	Criteria for Star One		
STARS Readiness Training	Star Beginner Kit and additional info to move to the next level	Education Qualifications Training	The Director/Owner has completed the STARS Readiness Training	
Assistance	Knowledge Base		Department Public Health and Human Services Licensing/Registration Requirements or can show the equivalent is met through Head Start Performance Standards, or Tribal Program Standards with a Memorandum of Understanding with the State of Montana. Should hold a registration/license or the equivalent.	
	Practitioner Registry info			
Safe Sleep Training	Career Path			Director/Owner on The Practitioner Registry.
Medication Training	Back to Sleep Materials			
Mandatory Reporting Training	Sample health check forms	Staff/caregivers to child ratio and group size	Department Public Health and Human Services Licensing/Registration Requirements or can show the equivalent is met through Head Start Standards, or Tribal Program Standards with a Memorandum of Understanding with the State of Montana. Should hold a registration/license or the equivalent.	
Start up Grants may be available for reaching Star One criteria		Family/Community Partnerships	Department Public Health and Human Services Licensing/Registration Requirements or can show the equivalent is met through Head Start Standards, or Tribal Program Standards with a Memorandum of Understanding with the State of Montana. Should hold a registration/license or the equivalent.	
		Leadership and Program Management	Application into STARS with verification of STARS Readiness Training, Safe Sleep Training, Medication Administration Training One for all staff administering medication, Mandatory Reporting Training, and Practitioner Registry active status.	
		Environments for Care and Learning	Department Public Health and Human Services Licensing/Registration Requirements or can show the equivalent is met through Head Start	

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Environments • Health, Wellness & Safety • Curriculum Development and Learning Activities • Relationships 	<p>Standards, or Tribal Program Standards with a Memorandum of Understanding with the State of Montana. Should hold a registration/license or the equivalent.</p> <p>Documentation of Daily Health Checks and, if needed, a Special Needs Health Care Plan.</p> <p>Back to Sleep materials are available and provided to each staff member and the Director/Owner and anyone caring for infants/toddlers has attended the state approved Safe Sleep Training.</p> <p>All staff members must have completed the state approved Medication Administration Training Part One.</p> <p>All staff members must have completed a state approved Mandatory Reporting Training.</p>
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Pathway to Star Two	Resources/Incentives to Star Two	Criteria for Star Two	
<p>Bringing Early Success Training To Providers (BEST)</p> <p>Professional Development Plan with Assistance</p>	<p>Star Kit</p> <p>Sample Professional Development Plan</p> <p>Knowledge base</p>	<p>Education Qualifications Training</p>	<p>50% primary staff/caregiver are on the Practitioner Registry</p> <p>All staff (director/owner, teaching, caregiving, aides, etc.) have a written Professional Development Plan linked to the Knowledge Base</p> <p>At least the director/owner has participated in an approved comprehensive entry level training which may include BEST, CDA, BLOCKS, SOS, or another approved pre-service training. If the director/owner hasn't taken one of these entry level trainings, in cooperation with the Resource and Referral Agency technical assistance staff, an assessment will be done utilizing the Knowledge Base.</p>
	<p>Research articles to show the benefits of lower ratios</p>	<p>Staff/caregivers to child ratio and group size</p>	<p>Children benefit from a staffing plan assuring continuity of care and benefit from having primary caregivers</p>
<p>Training and Assistance on informal/formal communication with parents</p>	<p>Community Resources workbook</p> <p>Star Kit: sample satisfaction surveys, parent handbooks, daily communication sheets, pre-enrollment procedures</p> <p>Fun Family Activities Companion to Early Learning Guidelines 0-5</p>	<p>Family/Community Partnerships</p>	<p>The provider follows an enrollment process that facilitates an exchange of information between the provider and parent, working to assure strong partnerships. Discussion includes a description of the program and policies as well as parents' values and wishes around such topics as eating, sleeping, toileting, and discipline.</p> <p>The provider has a signed Child Care Contract with each family. Topics in the contract include: hours, fees, payment schedule, provider's and child's vacation, sick leave and absences, responsibility for alternate care, termination policy.</p>

	<p>Parent-teacher conferencing tips and sample planning documents</p> <p>Family participation/involvement forms</p>		
<p>Child Care Resource & Referral agencies beginning business classes- Assistance to get started, Dollars and Sense class, links to local small business (link to Professional Development Plan based on need)</p> <p>Introduction information to Program Administration Scale/Business Administration Scale</p>	<p>Program Administration/Business Administration tools</p>	<p>Leadership and Program Management</p>	<p>Participate in Training on Program Administration Scales (PAS) (centers) - use as a program self-improvement plan for directors to set program goals in order to incrementally improve administrative practices after completing Program Administration Scale Training and conducts a self-assessment.</p> <p>Participate in training on Business Administration Scales (BAS) (family/group) - use as a program self-improvement plan for providers to set goals in order to incrementally improve professional and business practices after completing Business Administration Scale Training and conducts a self-assessment.</p> <p>All staff receive a copy of the appropriate Licensing/Registration Regulations</p>
<p>Child Care Resource & Referral agencies and Child Care Plus+</p> <p>Technical Assistance related to Americans with Disabilities Act, (ADA) and inclusive practice</p> <p>Introduction information</p>	<p>Child Adult Care Food Program, (CACFP)</p> <p>Early Learning Guidelines 0-5</p>	<p>Environments for Care and Learning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Environments • Health, Wellness & Safety • Curriculum Development and Learning Activities • Relationships 	<p>All staff has access to Montana's Early Learning Guidelines 0-5. At a minimum, one copy is available in each classroom for use. If Head Start, the program also has Head Start Performance Standards available in each classroom.</p> <p>All staff are certified in CPR/1st Aid</p> <p>The program has a documented and appropriate internal transition plan for moving children within the program if applicable. If a program has designated age/development groups or classrooms,</p>

<p>for Environmental Rating Scales</p> <p>Training/Assistance on linking The Montana Early Learning Guidelines 0-5 to curriculum and practice</p> <p>Training/ Assistance related to children's transitions</p> <p>Medication/Administration Training</p>			<p>the program should have a plan and process to assist children and families in the change of moving from one room to another and possibly to new caregivers, etc.</p> <p>At least 1 person is assigned food service/meal coordination for the feeding of children. All eligible programs participate in the Montana Child and Adult Care Food Program or have a rationale for not participating</p> <p>At least one staff member must have completed the state approved Medication Administration Training Part Two. If more than one person is administering medication, all individuals administering medication must attend the Part Two Training.</p> <p>Breast feeding is encouraged and the environment/program policies are designed to support this.</p> <p>Director/Owner completes training in the Environmental Rating Scales (ERS). As part of the training:</p> <p>- Centers will:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Self-assessment of every classroom/age group must be completed by the director or a staff member who has completed approved Environmental Rating Scales Training. 2. A written Improvement Plan is developed to address any Environmental Rating Scale subscale score below a 3.0. <p>- Family/Group will:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Self-assessment using Family Day Care Rating Scale-Revised after completing approved Family Day Care Rating Scale-Revised training. 2. Improvement plan to address scores below 3 in Family Day Care Rating Scale-Revised subscales of Language/Reasoning and Learning Activities.
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			Director/Owner complete training on Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS) - will complete self assessment
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Pathway to Star Three	Resources/Incentives to Star Three	Criteria for Star Three * Observers will be visiting the facility	
Certified Infant Toddler Classes Certified Preschool Classes Professional Development Plans	Star Kit	Education Qualifications Training	<p>75% of the caregiving staff (primary, teachers, aides) are on The Practitioner Registry AND at least 50% are at a Level 2 or higher</p> <p>At least the Director/Owner is at a Level 3 on The Practitioner Registry</p> <p>Professional Development Plans should be updated on existing staff, and plans should be developed for new staff that are individualized and linked to The Knowledge Base</p> <p>If caring for infants and/or toddlers, teachers/caregivers are enrolled or have completed the Montana Infant Toddler Caregiver Education classes or its equivalent.</p> <p>If caring for preschoolers, teachers/caregivers are enrolled or have completed the Montana Preschool Caregiver Education classes or its equivalent.</p>
		Staff/caregivers to child ratio and group size	No change from Star 2
	Montana specific resource lists Program Quality Improvement Plan document Child observation methods	Family/Community Partnerships	<p>The program provides families with information regarding community resources and transitioning their child into child care and out of child care to another educational setting</p> <p>Families have multiple opportunities for involvement, such as: an open house, volunteering, social events, potluck meals, parent/family surveys, etc.</p>

	and sample documents Touchpoints, Parents as Teachers or other family focused/strength based partnering with families, School Readiness teams		
Assistance re: reflective supervision and performance appraisals	Program Administration Scale/Business Administration Scale	Leadership and Program Management	<p>Program Administration Scale -centers- The average facility score assessed by an Program Administration Scale observer must be a 3.0</p> <p>Business Administration Scale - family/group-The average score assessed by a Business Administration Scale observer must be a 3.0.</p>
Assistance re: observations and curriculum Oral health training	<p>Environmental Rating Scales</p> <p>Montana modified document using Iowa's Assessment Checklist</p> <p>Observation tools</p> <p>Curriculum samples</p> <p>Consultation</p>	<p>Environments for Care and Learning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Environments • Health, Wellness & Safety • Curriculum Development and Learning Activities • Relationships 	<p>Take part in approved Oral Health Training</p> <p>Program uses an Approved Health & Safety Assessment form to document health & safety policies, sanitation practices, food safety, medication administration, and safe sleep practices.</p> <p>Adults participate in family style meal service with the children.</p> <p>Program safety is documented through the use of an Injury/Illness Prevention Checklist</p> <p>Environmental Rating Scales - Centers</p> <p>The average facility score of all sampled classrooms/ age groups assessed by an Environmental Rating Scale observer using Early Childhood Rating Scale-Revised, Infant Toddler Environmental Rating Scale-Revised must be 3.0 with no subscale scores lower than a 2.</p> <p>Each individual sampled classroom/age group must not have any subscale scores below 2.</p>

			<p>A written Improvement Plan is developed by the observer to address any Environmental Rating Scale subscale score below a 3.</p> <p>-Family/group Assessment by an Environmental Rating Scale observer using the Family Day Care Rating Scale-Revised. The average of these subscales will rate a 4.0 with no subscale scores lower than a 2.</p> <p>An improvement plan will be developed by the observer to address scores below a 3.0 on the Family Day Care Rating Scale-Revised</p> <p>CLASS assessment- score TBD</p>
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Pathway to Star Four	Resources/ Incentives For Star Four	Criteria for Star Four * an observer will be visiting the facility	
Assistance and onsite observation	Star Kit NAEYC Accreditation Standards NAFCC Accreditation standards	Education Qualifications Training	Director/Owner is at least a Level 4 on The Practitioner Registry. Star 3 criteria plus at least 25% of primary staff are at least a Level 3 or higher on The Practitioner Registry.
Accreditation self-study	NAEYC Accreditation Chart	Staff/Caregivers to child ratio and group size	NAEYC accreditation chart for correlating ratios, group size, ages for centers, page 83, NAEYC Early Childhood Program Standards and Accreditation Criteria (2005). No more than 3 under age 3 per caregiver for family/group homes and mixed age group settings
	Parent-teacher conferencing tips and sample planning documents	Family/Community Partnerships	Transition meetings are held with families whenever children move through or out of the program In addition to ongoing conversations, the provider has a scheduled meeting/conference with each child's parent(s) at least once per year. Together, they review the child's progress and needs, and set goals for the child. Opportunities are available to facilitate exchange of information between the program and families, such as, home/school journals or notebooks, bulletin boards, newsletters, parent advisory councils, parent volunteers and participation, etc. The program supports family needs by making referrals in the community, by providing resources such as the Family Fun Activities Companion to Early Learning Guidelines, Early Childhood Consultation if available in the community, Touchpoints if available, etc.

	Program Administration Scale/Business Administration Scale	Leadership and Program Management	<p>Program Administration Scale -centers- The average facility score assessed by an Program Administration Scale observer must be a 5.0</p> <p>Business Administration Scale - family/group- The average facility score assessed by an Business Administration Scale observer must be a 5.0</p>
Training/Assistance on observations mentoring	ServSafe Training Montana modified document using Iowa's Assessment Checklist	<p>Environments for Care and Learning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Environments • Health, Wellness & Safety • Curriculum Development and Learning Activities • Relationships 	<p>Program has a written curriculum plan aligned with The Montana Early Learning Guidelines 0-5</p> <p>Tooth brushing occurs daily with defined sanitation and health practices</p> <p>Direct food service staff attends an approved Food Safety Training in addition to the CACFP required training.</p> <p>Each child is observed using standard methodology to gather information about the child's development and experience in the environment. This information is used to inform curriculum and environment to support individual needs.</p> <p>Environmental Rating Scale -center The average facility score of all sampled classrooms/age groups assessed by an Environmental Rating Scale observer must be a 5.0 with no subscale scores lower than 2.</p> <p>A written Improvement Plan is developed by the observer to address any Environmental Rating Scale subscale score below a 3.5.</p> <p>-family/group Assessment by an ERS observer using the FDCRS. The average of these subscales will rate a 5.0 with no subscale scores lower than 2.</p> <p>A Written Improvement Plan is developed by the observer to address</p>

			scores below a 3.5 on the FDCRS Assessment. CLASS observation/assessment by observer- scores TBD
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Pathway to Star Five	Resources/Incentives for Star Five	Criteria for Star Five <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An observer will be visiting the facility • NAFCC applies to Group/Family providers • NAEYC applies to Centers 	
Child Care Resource & Referral mentoring	Accreditation Standards	Education Qualifications Training	NAFCC Accreditation Standards met Primary staff/caregivers caring for infants/toddlers have completed Infant Toddler 2 Training NAEYC Standards/Head Start Performance Standards Director/Owner is at least a Level 5 on The Practitioner Registry or NAFCC requirement met
		Staff/caregivers to child ratio and group size	NAFCC Accreditation Standards met NAEYC Standards are met or exceeded/Head Start Performance Standards
		Family/Community Partnerships	NAFCC Accreditation Standards met NAEYC Standards/Head Start Performance Standards
	Team Nutrition and other materials/information available statewide	Leadership and Program Management	NAFCC Accreditation Standards met NAEYC Accreditation Standards/Head Start Performance Standards Program Administration Scale -centers- The average facility score assessed by an Program Administration Scale Observer must be a 5.25 Business Administration Scale -family/group- The average facility score assessed by an Business Administration Scale Observer must be a 5.25 Program personnel are able and committed to contributing to the professionalism of the early childhood field, such as mentoring, technical assistance, program specific sliding fee scales, facilitating approved training at a conference, serving on a professional board, etc.

		<p>Environments for Care and Learning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Environments • Health, Wellness & Safety • Curriculum Development and Learning Activities • Relationships 	<p>NAFCC Accreditation Standards met</p> <p>NAEYC Accreditation Standards/Head Performance Start Standards</p> <p>The program has established policies/program focusing on the health and wellness of children, staff, and families which may include preventive health practices, nutritious recipes, gardening, recycling, personal growth, and natural environments or bring natural elements inside, physical activity promotion, etc.</p> <p>Health and Wellness information for families is included in parent communication methods</p> <p>Environmental Rating Scales</p> <p>-center</p> <p>The average facility score of all sampled classrooms/age groups assessed by an Environmental Rating Scale observer must be a 5.25 with no subscale scores lower than 2.</p> <p>Each individual sampled classroom/age group must have an Environmental Rating Scale score no less than 4.25.</p> <p>A Written Improvement Plan is developed by the observer to address any Environmental Rating Scale subscale score below a 4.25.</p> <p>-family/group</p> <p>Assessment by an Environmental Rating Scale observer using the Family Day Care Rating Scale-Revised. The average score must be at least a 5.25.</p> <p>A Written Improvement Plan is developed by the observer to address any Family Day Care Rating Scale-Revised subscale score below a 4.25.</p> <p>CLASS observation/assessment by observer- scores TBD</p>
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Program Administration Scale (PAS) – is designed to reliably measure the leadership and management practices of center-based early childhood organizations. It uses a 7-point rating scale (inadequate to excellent) measuring Leadership functions relating to helping an organization clarify and affirm values, articulate a vision, set goals, and chart a course of action to meet those goals over time. It also measures management functions pertaining to the actual orchestration of tasks and the development of systems to carry out the organizational mission.

Business Administration Scale for Family Child Care (BAS)-is designed to serve as a reliable and easy-to-administer tool for measuring and improving overall quality of business practices in family child care settings. High quality programs are run by providers who are intentional in their work, committed to ongoing professional development, engaged in ethical practice, and savvy about accessing community resources to enhance their program's effectiveness. These programs have business practices in place that promote financial stability, reduce the risk associated with doing business in a home environment, and comply with local and state legal requirements. (NAFCC, 2005).

Classroom Assessment Scoring System CLASS is an assessment/observation tool used to evaluate relationships and interactions. Positive teacher-student interactions are a primary ingredient of quality early educational experiences that launch future school success. This assessment covers three domains of teacher-student interaction: emotional support, classroom organization, and instructional support.

Environmental Rating Scales-

Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale-Revised (ECERS-R) is designed for preschool, kindergarten, and child care classrooms serving children 2 1/2 through 5 years of age, this widely used program quality assessment instrument can be used by program directors for supervision and program improvement, by teaching staff for self assessment, by agency staff for monitoring, and in teacher training programs. The assessment tool is organized in seven subscales (Space and Furnishings, Personal Care Routines, Language-Reasoning, Activities, Interaction, Program Structure, Parents and Staff). Each of the 43 items is expressed as a 7-point scale with indicators.

Infant/Toddler Environment Rating Scale-Revised (ITERS-R) is designed for use in center-based child care programs for infants and toddlers up to 30 months of age. The ITERS-R can be used by program directors for supervision and program improvement, by teaching staff for self-assessment, by agency staff for monitoring, and in teacher training programs. ITERS-R is organized in seven subscales (Space and Furnishings, Personal Care Routines, Listening and Talking, Activities, Interaction, program Structure, Parents and Staff). Each of 39 items is expressed as a 7-point scale with indicators.

Family Day Care Rating Scale-Revised (FCCERS-R) is a widely used program quality assessment instrument designed for use in family child care programs and is suitable for programs serving children from infancy through school-age. FCCERS-R is organized in seven subscales (Space and Furnishings, Personal Care Routines, Listening and Talking, Activities, Interaction, Program Structure, Parents and Provider). This quality assessment instrument accommodates the wider age range found in family child care programs and has a deep focus on sensitivity to cultural and socioeconomic diversity.